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ABSTRACT

The field of educational administration has a major credibility problem in academe because it is seen to lack a convincing theoretical base. In the practical world of politics, management, and teaching, it appears that educational values are easily rendered marginal in policy making and that team and institutional leaders lack a sophisticated understanding of educative leadership. This paper presumes that the field has to rebuild its theory around the trustworthy wisdom of exemplary practitioners and the ideas of educationally critical theorists. The focus is on how postgraduate learning might contribute to this reconstruction. The advantages and disadvantages of creating research-driven and research-based postgraduate curricula are discussed. References are included. (Author/TE)

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TOWARDS RESEARCH-DRIVEN AND RESEARCH-BASED POSTGRADUATE CURRICULA FOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

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ABSTRACT

The field of educational administration has a major credibility problem. In academe it is seen to lack a convincing theory base. In the practical world of politics, management and teaching it appears that educational values are easily marginalized in policy-making and that team and institutional leaders lack a sophisticated understanding of educative leadership. This paper presumes that the field has to rebuild its theory around the trustworthy wisdom of exemplary practitioners and the ideas of educationally-critical theorists. It focusses on how postgraduate learning might contribute to this reconstruction. It does this by discussing some advantages and disadvantages of creating research-driven and research-based postgraduate curricula.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States of America, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration has recommended (UCEA, 1987) that about 300 of the 500 university and college programs teaching educational administration should close. That is a major vote of no confidence. What would similarly rigorous Commissions find in other countries?

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More startling, however, was the finding by the Commission that the fundamental wisdom of the field, concerning *educational leadership*, should be reconstructed. We should not be surprised. Canadian voices (eg.s Greenfield, 1985; Hodgkinson, 1986; Holmes, 1985) have long protested the tired, ostensibly value-free, philosophically-deficient and irrelevant state of the field's theory. Australasians (eg.s Bates, 1984; Codd et al., 1985) have mounted a socially-critical challenge to the use of management science in education, pointing to the anti-educational hegemonies evident in policies. Similarly, when Glatter (1987) identified five policy issues for future leading British educators (staff development in contractionary contexts; the politics of professional-parent relationships; individual and institutional effectiveness; the power-charged policy-management interface; and educative managers as learners), he emphasized the moral, theoretical and pragmatic dilemmas involved; dilemmas that would outspan the management science basis of most preparatory programs.

In response to broadly similar contexts, New Zealanders have called for a 'craft theory' in educational administration (Battersby, 1987) that defines practice as sociologically imaginative (after Mills, 1970) philosophy-in-action (after Hodgkinson, 1981; Codd, 1984). They did so in a way that coheres well with an emerging Australasian theory of 'educative leadership' (Duignan and Macpherson, 1987).

There are other expressions of dissatisfaction from the United States. At the 1987 American Educational Research Association Conference, two symposia focussed self-critical reflection on the state of the educational administration professoriate (Forsyth, 1987) and on the moral imagination of teachers and administrators in schools (Greenfield, 1987). However, despite these shared international concerns, there is little available from these diverse settings to demonstrate that tertiary curricula is being transformed (Hughes, Ribbins and Thomas, 1985: 471-6), although it clearly should be the case.

While others can point to trends in their own settings, the Australian experience (Macpherson, 1987a) is one of disjoint and vigorous development primarily related to the interests of university teachers' research interests and to the context of positive demand for postgraduate credentials. Four major trends are evident. First, the specialism is being steadily re-integrated with educational studies, overlaying the move in the 1970s towards management studies. Second, the curriculum content is increasingly reflecting the recent theoretical advances in organization theory, particularly those articulating existential, cultural, socially-critical and philosophical perspectives.

Third, theorists and practitioners in the field are making less of a distinction between pure and applied research. Finally, the field appears to be developing stronger relationships with other fields, such as public administration, and drawing on the older disciplines; philosophy is a pertinent example.

The net consequence of these movements in the teaching and researching of educational administration in Australian universities is that the field is expanding well beyond management issues (in the North American sense) at the team and school level into multi-disciplinary policy studies at the system and institutional levels in education. (There is an interesting harmony here with persistent demands for decentralization, and democratization) The theory debate is becoming less characterized by simplistic ideological dualisms. There is a developing interest among lecturers (meaning all professors to tutors teaching the specialism) in the methods of justifying theory claims. Ideological agendas are, I suspect, being overtaken by epistemological critique. Overall, recent advances stress the pragmatic consequences of cultural agency, power, structure and the multiple contexts of practice, and imply the need for comprehensive and coherent theory related to educative leadership.

The basic proposition of this paper thus arises: if these rapid and vigorous advances are a consequence of lecturer-as-researcher interests in a context of positive postgraduate learning demand, should not practitioners access and participate in the refinement of valuable and trustworthy wisdom about educative leadership in education? The strategy explored here is universities and colleges providing research-based and research-driven postgraduate curricula. In the sections that follow I want to draw, in part, on previous work (Macpherson, 1987b) to discuss some of the conditions that would be crucial to such an approach being successful. They include: a negotiated curriculum; supportive pragmatic and political conditions; practitioners-as-researchers making personal sense of major educational and administrative problems; and a focus on philosophy-in-action (Hodgkinson, 1981), particularly on the epistemological aspects of methodology that relate to policy-making and implementation.

A NEGOTIATED CURRICULUM

Postgraduate research can be a less-than-educational affair. If the attitude is taken by the student, and encouraged by the supervisor, that expertise and wisdom about research are hierarchically distributed in universities, then a mindless cloning of techniques and understandings is likely to follow.

This is not an argument against the faithful transmission of valuable knowledge, which should be part of the exercise, but against any coursework being given foundational status. Clearly, the theory of the field lacks the coherence and sophistication for such a claim to be made. Rather, apart from introductory exposure to the nature, scope and limitations of the field's literature and to the early state of its methodological sophistication, it might be wiser for postgraduate learners to be invited to embark on contracted learning experiences.

Although the relative weightings of coursework and research should be negotiated, the arguments that follow suggest that largely self-directed research experiences should be favored. The key point is that given the need for educative leaders, it is crucial that universities and colleges offer what could be the last chance postgraduates have of learning *how to learn*.

While emphasizing this condition, it is recognized that if a practitioner-as-researcher is allowed absolute independence, the experience and its products could lack some particularly useful resources. Typically included should be degrees of political patronage, alternative and prior knowledge of the researched topics, investigative subtlety, a parsimonious style of communication and the other attributes of scholarly presentation. Finding the balance between these extreme positions of deference and independence is a responsibility that the student ought to share in, especially if research is held to be about the liberation and refinement of human intellect.

The often serendipitous supervisory relationship in postgraduate work has been found (Phillips, 1979) to affect how postgraduate researchers approach their studies. It clearly warrants and yet is unlikely to be given open appraisal. It is, for example, not simply the distribution of power in the relationship that makes supervision a complex and sensitive issue. Advising students at different stages of their research calls for subtlety, especially when it is realized that the constructs postgraduates have of *useful* supervision change as they progress through seven general stages: early enthusiasm; increasing interest in their work with bouts of irritation and frustration; transfer of dependence from their supervisor to the information resulting from their effort; generating their own ideas based on that information; frustration at not being able to develop these ideas; boredom with the original problem; and determination to finish what they started (Phillips, 1981:19). Curiously, this process is analogous to taking up a new and challenging leadership role.

Implied by this argument is the need to empower the postgraduate student with information and confidence enough to negotiate what can be a

very personal and exciting aspect of tertiary curriculum. In the earliest stages this means attending to the pragmatics of planning a study in a political context. As the language of institutional politics is usually contrived to conceal publicly inadmissible aspects of the process, the discussion must penetrate the facade of reconstructed wisdom about the research experience. Then, as a counterpoint, the postgraduate will need to acquire an appreciation of the scholarly traditions used to make sense of research purposes, approaches, key terms and research techniques. As the unpacking of the loaded dialects of methodologists is almost as important as understanding the practical and political contexts of being a practitioner-as-researcher, it is an issue I will come back to.

PRAGMATIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Before starting the investigative activity itself, that is, collecting useful and pertinent information, it is wise to become as clear as possible about intentions. The planning task is to relate research ends to mindset and means, so that the study programme can end, have trustworthy findings within limits, and serve selected purposes.

Put crudely, the basic objectives could be to pass selected courses and to submit a thesis or dissertation confident in the knowledge that it would satisfy the requirements of a supervisor, a research degrees committee and examiners. This implies placing in context those ringing phrases which suggest that the central purpose of postgraduate research is to 'add to mankind's total stock of knowledge', 'to allow you to take your place as an equal in the international community of scholars' or, as the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States put it: "to prepare a student for a lifetime of intellectual inquiry that manifests itself in creative scholarship and research" (cited in Bargar and Duncan, 1982: 1).

There is a more practical starting point for the self-directed and mature postgraduate researcher. It is ensuring that the primary purpose of the programme is defined in educationally and administratively valuable terms. The second step concerns setting the parameters of tangible end products. Examples are an important aid. Contents pages can help the researcher develop an early and notional 'game plan' into a formal 'research proposal' consistent with the general features of the negotiated curriculum. As the aim here is to try to envisage products related to issues considered worthy of investigation, without predefining findings or conclusions, the role of a

critical friend and a negotiable programme becomes crucial.

There is also an enduring system of myths to be understood. Most academics will concede that claims for academic freedom are sometimes deployed in universities to forestall attempts to evaluate or develop staff performance in areas such as research supervision. Quite understandably, academics tend to prefer other means of demonstrating their professionalism. This preference is often manifest in rigorous attention to the details and imagery of 'front work' (Goffman, 1976) about research. Verbal symbols of great potency include 'scholarship' and 'research standards'. It is not an easy task for the postgraduate to intuit their practical consequences. Postgraduates are therefore entitled to practical and political patronage so that they can concentrate on managing their own learning.

The process used to manage postgraduate researchers is often assumed by supervisors to be standardized (Phillips, 1979; 1981). However, the formalities of proposal writing, publicly presenting the research design, the conventions of gaining permission to gather data, being supervised, and what counts as scholarly writing, do vary enormously. This is why a supervisor can be surprised, even angered, by the decisions or assumptions about 'scholarship' or 'research standards' that temporarily gain ascendancy in their institution. Nevertheless, as the most direct conduits into the rule-making processes, the supervisor and advisory committee members remain the most crucial resources available to a research student.

Hence, while perhaps occasionally being puzzled by ongoing negotiations over what counts as 'scholarship' and 'research standards', a supervisor is nevertheless obliged to convey institutional and scholastic criteria. There is, nevertheless, little ground here for a supervisor to insist on intellectual or moral deference. Even responsibility for clarity and parsimony of expression in the products should remain primarily with the adult learner.

The fine balance between directing and advising student researchers remains an issue of perennial concern for supervisors. The point for postgraduate researchers is that a supervisors' concern, or worse, other supervisors' attention, is typically triggered by a student's unwillingness to consider the alternatives to, the subtleties of, and the predictable pitfalls in his or her research proposal. The general implication is clear: a research proposal is to be thought of as a cultural artifact that will have to be negotiated carefully and reaffirmed regularly as part of the learning programme.

There is, in addition to the practical and political aspects of postgraduate research, a massive stock of knowledge available about the activity of research itself that adds weight to the proposition that postgraduates

should be encouraged to develop a programme of self-directed on trustworthy ground.

PRACTITIONER-AS-RESEARCHER: MAKING SENSE

Research sponsored by universities differs from the typical processes people use to make sense of their world or of selected problems. Taking stock of the buzzing confusion of our worlds is a largely intuitive and continuous activity requiring little conscious direction, articulation or analysis. It just seems to happen and goes on happening. The multiple criteria we use to evaluate sensed phenomena are simply taken for granted. We see the world largely unaware of the vagaries of our perception and often remain blind to our cultural biases (Ornstein, 1972; Giddens, 1986). What counts as useful evidence and what stimulates learning seem as random as human experience itself. So what is so special about researching?

A preliminary set of answers from a traditional perspective would be that research is a conscious process of disciplined and rational inquiry. The activity is preplanned to focus attention onto one researchable issue, often termed 'the problem'. The researcher is obliged to consider prior knowledge of the issue. A coherent argument justifying the way the investigation was conducted is usually offered so that the findings can be given provisional trust. Finally, the entire enterprise is typically reported as an argument so that the wider community of researchers can evaluate the trustworthiness of the findings. Nothing is taken for granted, so runs the traditional logic of 'The Scientific Method'.

From the outset there is therefore a need for the research effort to have quite specific terms of reference. These are usually formally referred to as 'the statement of purpose' and spell out the details of the issue or 'the problem' to be investigated. In so doing, a specific social setting is described to indicate the practical meaning of the study and to justify particular information being collected. This highly pertinent information is termed data and is used as evidence. The prior knowledge of the issue, often referred to as 'the theoretical context', is a crucial indicator *that* others' research and thinking on the matter have been considered. Hence the argument that postgraduate curricula in educational administration should be research-based. How do these opening activities relate to the end product and to the 'real world' of administering education?

Broadly speaking, each doctoral or master's research thesis begins with

an argument that culminates in a researchable problem. This first argument is used as the backbone of the opening chapters: an introduction to the study with a definition of purposes and terms; a description of the practical context; a review of the literature on the issue; and ends with a case for researching the issue in a particular way, i.e. the methodology. Definitions, key questions, approaches, and techniques for collecting, summarizing and weighing evidence are central issues in the methodological case that links up research purposes with the approach and methods selected.

Influential reports on education set the scene in precisely this manner. If it were not the case, little trust would be given to the findings. It will now be clear how crucial it is when using the traditional canons of inquiry to (a) spell out the purposes that are to remain constant for the study, and (b) use specified terms with great precision. There are, however, research styles that allow for 'foreshadowed problems' and for more temporary terms of reference and initial assumptions. Nevertheless, to a greater or lesser extent, key terms defining the topic act as organizing metaphors throughout a study. Some metaphors can become so pervasive as to help define the scope of a field of inquiry (Candy, 1986). To the critical reader of research, the metaphorical meanings of the key terms signal the approach taken by the researcher, and therefore set limits on the type of knowledge that *can be* produced by the research. All educative administrators require this critical awareness.

The second argument of a research thesis (Marshall, in Macpherson and Marshall, 1985:17) addresses the questions being researched. In sequence, chapters typically present pertinent data, summarize and evaluate this new evidence on the issue, relate the findings to prior knowledge and then argue a closing position, often suggesting directions for further research. It follows that critical readers learn that theory is a web of belief (Quine and Ullian, 1978) constantly being renegotiated and elaborated. Again, research that considers prior knowledge is, by definition, research-bounded, and if intended to reconstruct and extend understanding, it will be a research-driven exercise.

In essence, there are three basic dimensions to a research proposal: the topic, ideas about the topic and ideas about researching the topic. So central is 'the topic', and how it is defined using a particular set of assumptions, that it is crucial for that the metaphorical and paradigmatic dimensions of topic definition to be understood. Let me explain, using Morgan's (1980) thinking.

Researchers in educational administration tend to be concerned with understanding the administration of educators but far less so with understand-

ing their own learning about administration in education. They research in organized educational settings. Like all people, each researcher has a unique view of the world which predefines *how* issues are seen. As one view of the world is inevitably used, it means that a research 'paradigm', 'perspective' or 'approach' has been adopted. Imagine offering the topic of 'timetabling' to four researchers with quite different mindsets, and asking them to elaborate the topic into a research proposal. Four different yet methodologically coherent proposals could emerge.

Researcher A presumes that schools are real and need to be efficiently regulated in a turbulent environment. The word 'timetabling' is to be defined in purely pragmatic metaphors. This researcher is using a *functionalist* research paradigm. Research questions could therefore follow about timetabling techniques and consequences, quite possibly couched in terms of variable factors, causes and effects, and prediction.

Researcher B presumes instead that schools are negotiated social realities. A 'timetable' is therefore a precarious cultural artifact. It is to be defined using constructivist metaphors. Research questions consistent with this *interpretive* paradigm might focus on how timetables come into being, how they are sustained, conceived and changed, and what meaning they have for the individuals that comprise the timetabled learning community.

Researcher C also believes that organizations are social constructions but that they dominate patterns of thinking about timetabling to channel and constrain outcomes. This *radical humanist* perspective would be consistent with defining timetabling in metaphorical language about recreating the 'myths', 'mystique' and 'aura' that sustain hegemonies. A hegemony is a social process through which a group "can govern or 'lead' culturally or politically by winning intellectual and moral leadership" (Poynting, 1986:17). Researching ideological symbols and the associated patterns of practices and assumptions could follow. While this might sound inappropriately radical, in practical research terms it could mean helping a school community to reconstruct the timetable using the techniques of action research.

Researcher D, however, views the world using a *radical structuralist* paradigm. Schools have real structures which dominate people in them. 'The timetable' is therefore defined in metaphors to do with social forces and intrinsic tensions between the opposing elements of conservatism and radicalism. Researching timetabling would therefore investigate these tensions. How do the powerful control the status quo and changes? Above all, what actions and meanings are needed to democratize timetabling?

But with these four examples, why the emphasis on the *written* defini-

tion of purposes and approach? Writing a topic out in detail, as part of a contracting phase, and then examining the language used, should lead to three separate realizations, realizations that are crucial components in the intellectual armory of educational administrators.

First, how the topic is defined depends closely on the investigative paradigm or mindset being used, either consciously or unconsciously. The approach used precasts the type of knowledge the study will be operating within and therefore the type of knowledge claims that the researcher will be able to make as conclusions. For example, when Researcher D wants to mount a case for rethinking the current distribution of power in the school, given the tendency of the curriculum to channel student career choices, it will mean the use of a different knowledge system to that used by Researchers A, B or C.

It is probably only through research-based experience that an educational administrator can come to appreciate that different types of knowledge have different assumptions, and therefore different methods of justification. Often unrealized is that naive interpretations of research results provide false boundaries to understanding. It is a wise researcher who can identify the epistemological relativity of his or her findings, and yet value others' work based on different assumptions. As our field is not yet famous for such wisdom, I will come back to this point.

Second, the metaphorical nature of the terms used to define a topic spill over into the language used throughout a study. Researcher A, for example, might take up the key organizing metaphor of 'decision-making' to make sense of timetabling. This term, 'decision-making', will act as a touchstone for the abstract ideas that Researcher A will 'find' in the literature, and thereby define some as 'relevant' and others as 'irrelevant' to the topic. A note here of demystification: different researchers use different combinations of words to refer to this network of abstract ideas considered to be 'relevant' to the topic and paradigm. Included can be 'the theoretical context', 'the organizing framework', 'the conceptual basis' or 'the theoretical framework'. While it is as well to adopt one's supervisor's terms, the adoption of metaphors should be an informed decision of a consenting adult.

There is a third realization. Until now I have emphasized how the written definition of the topic and investigative approach used in research-based learning yield insights into paradigmatic assumptions, and how the metaphors used define some abstract ideas as 'relevant'. The definition of purpose will also suggest what *types* of information will be most useful as evidence, and what data collection techniques will be most appropriate. In a

data saturated world, administrators need sophisticated means of screening information, particularly for valid, reliable and relevant information.

As the theoretical context of each study differs with the uniqueness of each purpose and topic, it follows that individual researchers should progressively elaborate the dimensions of the conceptual framework of their study in close consultation with their supervisors. Crucial advice and debate will include how significant and how researchable the topic and the specific research problem chosen are. But is it important for a practitioner to become familiar with the language of methodology?

PRACTITIONER-AS-RESEARCHER: KNOWLEDGE CREATOR AND CRITIC

Methodology is a collective, often-abused term for an argument that should incorporate two broad strands: the methods and rules for accomplishing a research purpose, and (at least of equal importance) the rationale justifying the appropriateness of that particular path to knowledge. In the compact dialect of methodologists, it means procedures-given-a-purpose plus epistemological justification.

But such words should not terrify us, providing we can place them in the wider contexts of human affairs and make personal sense of them. As Eisner pointed out:

one of the traditional aims of science is the discovery of truth. The Greeks had a word for it: episteme, the discovery of true and certain knowledge. Although many modern philosophers and historians of science ... take a softer, more nominal view of science, not all philosophers of science do, and for a great many researchers in the social sciences, the correspondence theory of truth still holds sway. Propositions about reality are believed to be true to the extent to which those propositions correspond to the reality that they attempt to describe or explain. Given this view, science aims at making true statements about the world.

Artistic approaches to research are less concerned with the discovery of truth than with the creation of meaning. What art seeks is not the discovery of the laws of nature about which true statements or explanations can be given, but rather the creation of images that people will find meaningful and from which their

fallible and tentative views of the world can be altered, rejected or made more secure. Truth implies singularity and monopoly. Meaning implies relativism and diversity. Truth is more closely wedded to consistency and logic, meaning to diverse interpretation and coherence.

(Eisner, 1981: 9).

There is therefore value in a range of perspectives being understood and used, each to cast a unique light on the diverse problems of administration. For example, quantitative data are typically numbers gathered and organized to test hypotheses developed from a network of ideas representing complex situations. What appear to be logical connections between premises (derived from prior knowledge and speculation) require testing. This hypothetico-deductive research style is consistent with the traditions referred to above, namely those of the 'hard sciences' that feature survey research using questionnaires, large populations, systematic sampling and sophisticated statistical analysis. When, for example, you are creating and testing alloys for use in aircraft, the procedures have to guarantee tolerance levels that will ensure performance standards up to, and possibly including impact with flying pigs. Methodological rigor is typically established using the statistical and rationalistic criteria of 'The Scientific Method' (see, for example, Guilford and Fruchter, 1973; Entwistle, 1973; Entwistle and Nisbet, 1973).

Qualitative data, in sharp contrast, tries to convey the quality or the richness of the social world. But it is not simply a matter of observing, perhaps quantifying, and then describing the behaviors of, say, educational administrators in order to understand and take up a 'role'.

The epistemological questions raised by qualitative methodology challenge the presuppositions of the natural science approach to scientific investigation. Whereas the former may assume that the study of observable deeds and expressed words is adequate knowledge about man and his natural world, qualitative methodologies assume there is value to an analysis of both the inner and outer perspectives of human behavior. In the German, the term is verstehen. This inner perspective or 'understanding' assumes that a complete and ultimately truthful analysis can only be achieved by actively participating in the life of the observed and gaining insights by means of introspection.

(Rist, 1980: iii-iv, original emphasis)

Using the examples cited earlier, Researcher B might seek to portray the experience of timetabling from the qualitative frames of reference used by the timetablers *and* those timetabled. Data will have socially complex dimensions and has to be collected in natural settings.

A naturalistic research style is consistent with the traditions of ethnography, that is, fieldwork using participant observation, interviews, personal documents and reflections, small samples and case studies and the sophisticated tools of cultural analysis. Methodological rigor in naturalistic inquiry therefore relates to the naturalistic-ecological and the qualitative-phenomenological nature of the experiences being investigated (Owens, 1982). The first aspect means demonstrating that the context influences behaviors and the meanings of action as much as, if not more than, individuals present. The second aspect, introduced above in Rist's *verstehen* argument, implies demonstrating that the data of experience cannot be fully understood without knowing the interpretive framework of the actor, and the person's personal history, thoughts, feelings, values and intentions about his or her experience. Complex indeed. Two recent monographs that offer assistance are on interpretive research in education (Watkins, 1983) and another that reviews ethnographic research in educational administration (Macpherson, 1983a).

The key point here is that qualitative and quantitative styles of research derive from two contrasting philosophical traditions: existential phenomenology and logical empiricism. The differences are most marked in the product. Where the account of the interpretivist would seek to portray aspects of the phenomenological richness of real world experience, the positivist following the canons of logical empiricism would emphasize a network of causal variables, hypothesis-testing, prediction and all the objective accoutrements of rationalism. Both have their place in administration.

The consequences of the two dominant traditions of positivism and interpretivism are particularly manifest when questions of reliability and validity arise. The crucial issue, whatever the approach used, is that the linkages between the problem, paradigm, metaphors and techniques must be made explicit so that provisional trust can be given to findings. But as I regularly emphasized above:

There are many different languages and logics in educational research. One helpful way to get some perspective on them is to

see their roots in three dominant 20th century philosophical traditions (à la Bernstein): logical empiricism (positivism); interpretive theories (analytic, phenomenological, and hermeneutic); and critical theory (neo-Marxist). Another way is to demonstrate, through an analysis of the universal phenomena of pedagogy, that empirical (causal), interpretive (meaningful), and critical (normative) dimensions characterize pedagogy and hence all need to be studied if pedagogical research is to be honest to its subject matter.

(Soltis, 1984: 5)

I see little reason for not applying the same arguments to research and postgraduate education in educational administration, especially if the theory and practice of the field are to be educative in intent and outcome (Duignan and Macpherson, 1987). To be openminded about research work across traditions means developing an understanding of their languages and logics.

It is here I can draw attention to the particular contribution of critical paradigms, such as those used by Researchers C and D above. Both, it will be recalled, presumed that administrators and the administered live in partly predetermined worlds and exhibit attitudes and perceptions with historical and unexamined antecedents. As critical researchers therefore have to identify the history of social relations involved and how ideologies have distorted perceptions, they have to obtain primary validation of their data from the actors themselves and the socio-historical contexts that have shaped their awareness of conflict and change.

An *a priori* task is therefore to reconstruct the metaphors used to anchor critical research, as Foster (1986) has done with the term 'leadership'. Further, the basic difference between using critical approaches and interpretive or positivist mindsets, is that socially-critical researchers want to understand agency, intentions and values in order to improve education as a social force for change. Where positivists emphasize 'truth' and interpretivists 'meaning', critical researchers strive for the reconstruction of society. Hence, critical ethnography often turns into action research in a case study (Jennings, 1986: 18) or pedagogical consultancy (Grundy, 1986: 26-32).

Two final reasons for the basic proposition of this paper is that practitioners-as-researchers would become very aware that there are ideal methods of obtaining each type of information (Zelditch, 1962) and come to appreciate

that the greatest aid to validation is triangulation; a metaphor borrowed from navigation where multiple bearings are used to precisely define a position. The ability to mount an educative policy depends in part on the assemblage and deployment of trustworthy data that are set into multiple arguments that triangulate. This takes us to the most fundamental question: why even do research?

LEADERS AS LEARNERS

This penultimate section is a personal position that seeks to anchor research in educational administration in educational ideals. By this I mean that my favorite answer to the question, "why research educational administration?" turns not so much on the values that are (or should be) served by the actions of researchers and practitioners who occasionally do research, but on the values and skills that they *learn when researching*. It has long appeared to me that preparing for, and then arguing a thesis, is analogous to the key dynamic of peer consultancy. Through intense reflection, the subtle analysis of phenomena, the gathering and weighing of evidence in terms of past experience and thinking, all prior to the studied delivery of sophisticated advice, has its most marked effect not on the advised, but on the consultant. Advice, so studiously given, has become internalized 'truth' (Macpherson, 1983b; Duignan and Macpherson, 1987). Similarly, postgraduate research has the potential to be a very sophisticated form of learning. But what is learned that will justify the doing of research?

The practitioner-as-researcher learns that researching is bounded and profound learning. Also learned is that the enterprise is predicated within a world view, related to a chosen body of prior knowledge and constrained by a particular purpose. However grandiose the language of researchers, each research initiative and its outcomes must be seen as an epistemologically modest affair, despite the depth. Such critical wisdom is valuable.

Central to each study, however seemingly objective be the use of theory and technique, is the researcher. Each study is an extension of self. It extends the key organizing metaphors of a learned self. Such self-knowledge generates wisdom. Indeed, researchers cannot but encounter the I — Thou dimensions of data, especially when confronting questions such as: 'What will count as data?' and; 'Whose account will count?' It is a humanizing activity.

Researchers also learn that their activity affects outcomes, the context

and knowledge about researching and learning itself. It induces reflective thinking. Sophisticated investigation (concerning the administration of education) is soon learned to have paradigmatic, metaphorical and technical dimensions. Postgraduate students learn that anything less would be naive and less than educational. Further, whatever their paradigm, most researchers seem to learn that research problems are not 'out there' but 'in here', and this occurs despite the traditionally objectified terms used for definitions. The personal trauma induced by each research initiative triggers new levels of personal investment in education. Self-directed personal growth is learned.

As this investment inevitably draws on the innermost resources of each researcher, profound reflection is usefully triggered in the areas of personal adequacy and values. But it is more than a personal long march. The creation of a thesis of scholastic merit will alert even the most egocentric person to the value of truly critical friends. Indeed, the demands of the sustained effort required are such that each researcher learns new dimensions about the relationships that support such focussed endeavor. The interdependence of people in learning communities is re-emphasized.

An associated outcome is that being involved in research imparts new understandings about the nexus between the qualities of knowledge and the ways and means we have of creating it; in a phrase, the values and practices of research scholarship. I consider it important that educational administrators hold to an educative ideology by becoming better learners. As Novak (1980) demonstrated, this means gaining a deeper understanding of the learning process, the nature of knowledge, how to conduct research, and how to leave an "audit trail" (Owens, 1982:19) for evaluation has been made.

SUMMARY

Postgraduate research in educational administration has the potential to assist with the reconstruction of the field's wisdom if it more directly serves the interests of education and those who would lead in education. Curricula should be research-based and research-driven if a major aim is coherence between the development and application of knowledge. A practicable strategy is to use practitioners-as-researchers.

Consider the essence of educative research. It can be sophisticated learning that culminates in a thesis. Each exercise is systematically bounded

by purposes, a topic, a selected body of prior knowledge associated with key organizing concepts, and an argued methodology. Learned is the process of building a coherent exposition relating a problem to an investigative paradigm, to key metaphors and to data collection, summary and evaluation techniques. It is the essence of all effective problem-solving and policy-making processes.

Finally, there is no more sophisticated argument than a thesis. Recall now the theme of this conference; educative leadership in politicized contexts. In an uncertain world where major issues of state and education can be settled by appeal to emotion, by the managed processes of consensus, by the cynical calculation of conjectured consequence, by the immoral and artful creation of organizational myths and imagery, or by cunning appeal to selected high principles, it is crucial that research methodology is learned, developed and used to address the state of humanity.

If educational administration is ultimately to be educative, the *development* of the knowledge used to inform decisions in educational administration is best not left to those armed with emotive, political or calculative social devices. Administrators who are competent researchers will have the knowledge and ability to evaluate research and be able to rely on good research in their decision making. My final point is therefore that as learning and applying the criteria of scholarly research and argument are crucial philosophical tools of educative administrators, postgraduate scholars in the specialism deserve nothing less than research-driven and research-based curricula.

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